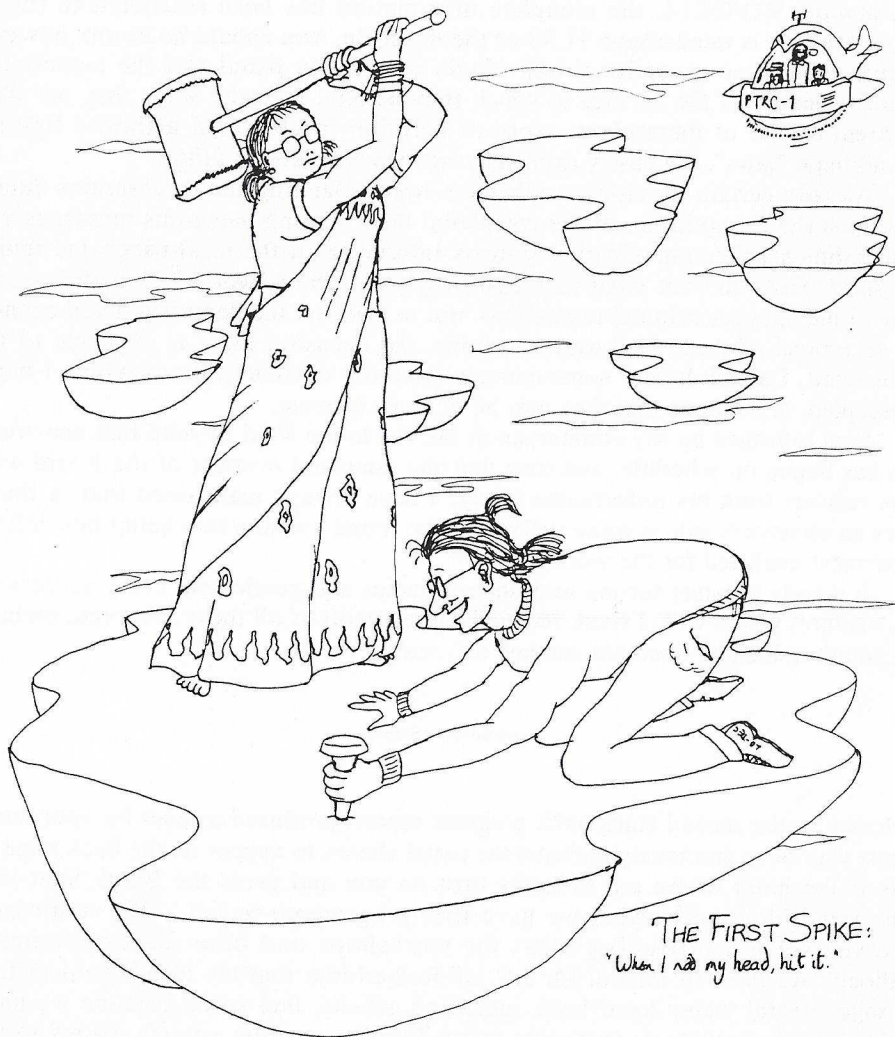


HARMONIX



THE FIRST SPIKE:
"When I ran my head, hit it."

Progress Report 2

The 9th Annual British Filk Convention, Rozel Hotel, Weston-Super-Mare
January 31st - February 2nd 1997

To: The Directors, The Panharmonic TransVoidal Railway Company Limited
From: Regional Observer, Earth
Subject: Survey of local responses

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You will be pleased to learn, I am sure, that the announcement of your railway's impending construction has caused considerable stir among those of the indigenous population who have received the news. In accordance with your directive number RO/E/014, the complete information has been restricted to those whose mindset is rated above 11.38 on the @? scale. You should be aware, however, that even these exceptional individuals necessarily partake of the essentially primitive nature of the species to which they belong. In many ways they are like children: unsure of themselves, prone to belief in insubstantial authority figures and notional "laws", but easily excited by novelty and tawdry glitter.

Already certain provident souls have begin planning the celebrations attendant upon the inauguration of the completed line, sending numerous messages via their rudimentary communication systems informing all the local tribes and inviting guests from all over what they charmingly call their "world." Nonetheless, in view of the abovementioned restrictions, not to mention the depressed local economy so typical of these backwater domains, the occasion itself is expected to be quite small. I attach hereto some extracts from the communications which I have intercepted, in the hope that they may be of some interest.

I am informed by my counterpart at Ne Pas in the Void Beyond that construction has begun on schedule, and trust that the esteemed member of the Board will soon recover from his unfortunate injury. I have always maintained that in these cases an observer's role is quite sufficient, the actual construction being best left to those most qualified for the work.

It merely remains for me to wish you, ladies and gentlemen, every success in this venture, which will, I trust, redound to the credit of all those involved, including your humble and obedient servant, etc., etc.

Welcome to the second HarmonIX progress report, produced as ever by your committee who have graciously suffered the usual aliases to appear on the back page. This is the point where we suddenly turn on you and press the Black Spot into your trembling hands. See, we have this programme to fill... We've already received several intriguing ideas for workshops and other divertissements (although we have to inform Mr J.G. of Rotherhithe that his idea would in fact infringe several major local laws, including gravity, and so on balance we have decided not to include it); we want more. Ideally, we want enough events to fill three conventions, so that we can pick the best for this one and flog the other two off cheap on the next planet--ah, 'hem, sorry, what was I saying?

Membership Gubbins.

The list of current attending members is on the back of this PR. If you aren't on this list but have paid and should be, or someone you know isn't on it and should be, then let me know and I'll panic sooner rather than later. If someone you know isn't on it because they aren't yet joined up and should be, let them know so that they can panic sooner rather than later. Membership now costs £23 per adult, £11.50 per child, and it will get even more expensive as the convention steams closer to its arrival date.

Programme.

We are exponents of the minimalist school of convention programming. Last time we ran a convention at the Rozel, we moved the concert from Saturday night to Saturday afternoon, in the hope that this would so confuse everyone that they wouldn't turn up for it but instead get on with their various cheerful ad hoc filkings in the bar and lounge, but we failed, and everyone came along to the concert as usual; so this time we're moving the concert again: somewhere else, on a different weekend. In other words, we do not propose to run a formal concert at all. Instead, our noble Guest of Honour Sue Mason has expressed a willingness to be in charge of a less structured event on Saturday afternoon, somewhat more like a very large and chaotic combination of circle and request filking. To this end we will be asking people to do two things when they arrive at the convention: one, ask for specific songs by specific performers, so that these performers can be warned in advance, and two, volunteer themselves to perform. Then everything gets written down on little bits of paper and drawn at random, or Sue says "that reminds me of...." and asks for something, or whatever else seems to be the mood of the gathering at the time. This occasion will not be suitable for any performance which requires long set-up times: those using hi-tech gear and suchlike will need to book early to get separate slots with gaps before them for set-up.

We shall of course have the rest of the weekend to play with, filling it with sets from the larger, higher-tech bands and groups, sets from individuals, panels, games, workshops in hedgehog juggling, or any other items which people suggest or offer to run. Don't be backward about coming forward with your new and brilliant ideas, or with suggestions for the resurrection of old and wonderful events: we want to hear from you, it's your convention.

A Plea

Please send all offers of assistance, questions, notes and queries, marginalia, jottings, illoes, filloes, pillows, etc.. to Chris at the con address (once again, adorning the back page) by conventional mail. This makes everything easier for everyone.

WEAPONS POLICY

The counsels of Chris, canniest of con-lords:
"Let all who attend be oathbound together:
Bide these precepts on banishment's pain.
Sword shall be scabbarded, handgun be holstered,
Shield shall be shed ere shelter we share.
Weapons of war be banned from our bard-hall;
Outcast, abandoned be arms and armour.
Quarrels be quieted, blood-feuds be bated,
That peace may prevail till the filkron be past."

(From the Filkinga Saga, ii. 195-203.)

TAPING POLICY

Whan that to West-toune sondrie folke do wende
Upon swete musicke hir eares to benede,
Of thise my wordes lat aller men tak hede
And kepe the pees by following my rede.
Lat everich on that lysteth to recorde
Swich songes as mayn be sunge for the horde,
Entrete the syngers leve, in politesse,
For tis namore than verray kindlinesse.
Lat hem be quiet, styлле and kepe hir plas,
Nor throst hir Walkemene in the syngers fas.
And swich recordynges mote nat be solde,
Lest courteisye be sacrificed for golde.
In fyne, my bounden dutye gars me seyn
To all that doe recorde eche jounde streyn
For later plaisance, on tape or dyske:
Know that ye doe so atte your owne ryske.

(From The Filker's Tale, 137-52.)

WESTON-SUPER-MARE

What can one say about Weston-super-Mare that has not been said before? (Something relevant, perchance?--Ed) Once again this popular seaside resort throws open its gates and plays host to our little gathering. Weston-super-Mare... truly it is a name to conjure with. Composed as it is of fifteen letters, including no less than six vowels and nine consonants, not forgetting--and let us never be so remiss as to forget--the two optional hyphens, the possibilities are endless. ARM PURE WET NOSES springs to mind, as does WE SPEAR MORE NUTS. ME SUPERSTAR ENOW goes without saying, really, while TRUMPER ON SEE-SAW harks back to happier days of childhood. PRONE RATS SUE MEW, on the other hand--

(Look, don't you think you'd be better off leaving this sort of thing to Bristow and getting on with the PR, hmm?--Ed)

Oh, very well.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

PR3 should be out around Christmas, and will feature such delights as:

How To Get There: in which we bamboozle you with arcane and contradictory directions, in a little known dialect of Gobbledegook, on how to get from Ormskirk to Brean Down by left-hand-thread unicycle;

Guest bios: dedicated teams of potted researchers have slaved-for months over these incunabular digests of incomplete and misleading hearsay information which may or may not relate to our honoured guests;

Programme notes: why is Amaretta disguised as a boy? Who's that bloke in the feathers who keeps going "pop"? When does Fledermaus die? And what's on the other channel? (Answer: France.) Tune in for the straight poop on none of the above...

And, doubtless, more waffle from me, Chris, Tom, Ken and the Countess, without whom I would be even more impossible than I am now.

MORNINGTON CRESCENT PROBLEM

(Tackett v. Palk, 1988, Helsinki semi-final)

1. Air Street
Shaftesbury Avenue
Bethnal Green
Morning Lane??

Langham Place!
Upper Richmond Road
Electric Avenue

Send your answer, on a postcard, to yourself, and you should receive it within three days.

Hotel Booking and general information.

Enclosed with this PR you will find (if you search carefully) a copy of the Hotel Booking Form - or more than one copy if the envelope was addressed to more than one of you.

Everybody knows how to fill in, or fill out, a form like this. I won't insult your intelligence by explaining.

The hotel would like us to get a deposit on the bed or room, from each and every person who wants to stay, in the sum of **TWENTY POUNDS STERLING**, cheques or money orders made payable to "**The Rozel Hotel**": which deposit presumably, though they haven't said as much in writing, will not be returned if you fail to turn up, but will be set against your final bill if you do put in an appearance. Why they are so edgy I can't imagine, but there it is: someone must have been horrid to them since we were last there in 1993. So please can you remember to send that (those) cheque(s) with your completed booking form(s).

Rooms are charged at the following rates:

One in a room: £32 per person per night

Two in a room: £28 p.p.p.n.

Three or more in a room: £26 p.p.p.n.

for Friday and Saturday nights; on Sunday night a charge of £20 per person will be made for bed and breakfast, provided that the person is staying on rather than arriving specially.

Children under the age of fourteen will be charged £12 per night if they are sharing a room with an adult.

There are various different kinds of rooms: some have shower and bath (S/B), some have bath only (B) and some have shower only (S), so if you feel strongly about whether you have a shower or a bath, or really don't particularly care, please say so: it will make it a lot easier to allocate rooms to please everybody if I know these details. I'll be allocating by preference as far as I can: if you book late, you get what's left.

The hotel has the following rooms:

Single:	8:	6 x B, 2 x S
Double:	12:	5 x B/S, 3 x B, 4 x S
Twin:	8:	4 x B/S, 1 x B, 3 x S
Double + single:	14:	7 x B/S, 4 x B, 3 x S
Double + 2 single:	1:	1 x B
Double + single + bunks:	2:	1 x B/S, 1 x B

The bunk beds are said only to be suitable for children; but I gather that very small, light adults might be allowed to use them provided that they are Good and eat up all their greens or something.

Speaking of eating, the hotel are keen to have some idea of how many people they will be feeding on each of the three nights, so that they can get in the fresh food they cook for us; so the hotel booking form also has a section about that. If you are likely to want to eat in the hotel rather than going and searching about in town, it would help if you say so in advance.

There now follows the absolutely standard plea of every beleaguered Hotel Liaison person since the dawn of recorded time, the one which goes "Please book your room soon because then I won't go mad in January having to process everything at once and wrestle with the programme and the piano-tuner at the same time" which seems even more reasonable this time when you consider the piano tuner.... seriously, the sooner the better. Thank you for your kind consideration.

Right then. This is the page where you get to fill forms in that aren't the Hotel Booking Form, which is, of course, located elsewhere. If you haven't filled that in yet, go away and do it now, then come back here.....

Done?

Good.

Now. To the bottom right of this text box (it's an Apple Mac, not a PC, so I can call it that) is a small picture. This is the design, by Zander, for the HarmonIX T-Shirt. If you'd like to order one of these exclusive items of clothing, to wear down the pub, at friends' parties, or just to scare the life out of your aunt Agatha, then read on.

If you don't, then say 'Ooh, it is nice though' and go put the kettle on. Or watch Eastenders. Or something.

These will be available for the sum of £6. They'll be also available in Black on White, Blue, Red, or, if you're awkward, Black on Black. Should you like one, the following form should be cut out, filled in, and sent to the convention address:

YES!, I'D LIKE A HARMONIX T-SHIRT!

I'D LIKE IT IN.....(colour)

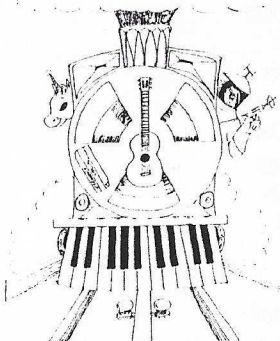
I'D LIKE IT IN S/M/L/XL (INDICATE WHICH)

I ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THIS IS AN ORDER FORM, AND UNLESS I'M BANKRUPT IN FEBRUARY, I'M PAYING FOR THIS T-SHIRT WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT.

name:

membership no:

I'd like t-shirt.



Thank you for your attention, now back to the membership form.

Membership costs £23, children 14 or under on 1.2.97, £11.50. Cuddly toys and other adjuncts can buy a badge on the day and stop complicating my life with plaintive kapolky meepings. So there. (Counter-anthropomorphic Chris strikes again.)

3 West Shrubbery, Redland, Bristol, BS6 6SZ, England

I wish to apply for membership of HarmonIX.

I enclose £23/£11.50 (delete as appropriate).

(Cheques made payable to HARMONIX)

I will now write, in LEGIBLE BLOCK LETTERS, my

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

I understand that these details will be kept on computer
FOR THIS CONVENTION'S USE ONLY.

HARMONIX

Members as of Sept '96

Tom Abba	Melusine
Lissa Allcock	MEW
Phil Allcock	Miki
Countess Axlides	Tom Nanson
Rika the Bardling	Erica Neely
Andrew Barton	Nicky
D.J. Bass	Zander Nyrond
Chris Bell	Omega
Dan Bennett	Oriole
Michael J. Bernardi	Nigel Parsons
Susan Booth	David Peek
Paul Bristow	Persis
Roger Burton-West	Rachel
Guila De Cesare	Mike Richards
Neil Chambers	Rick
Rafe Culpin	Tony Rogers
Steve Davies	Rowan
Robert Day	Rufus
Lawrence Dean	Ken Shinn
Kerstin Droge	Spencer
Sue Edwards	Kathy Sterry
Vera Emlyn	Barbara Stewart
Colin Fine	John Stewart
Brian Flatt	Marcus Streets
Gwen Funnell	Talis
Hitch	Teddy
Valerie Housden	Colin Tuckley
Rhodri James	Peter Tyers
Jenny	Vaurien (Chiefy)
Kate	Anne Walker
Kenneth	Jared Benjamin Walker
Keris	Tim Walker
Talis Kimberley	Peter Wareham
Annette Kirk	Wendy
Tim Kirk	Karen Westhead
Maeve	Kathy Westhead
The Magician	Mike Westhead
Marion	Peter Westhead
Sue Mason	Yooh